

EUGENE WATER & ELECTRIC BOARD
WORK SESSION
February 16, 2021
5:30 P.M.

Commissioners may pose questions to staff prior to the scheduled board meeting. To view Commissioners' pre-meeting questions and staff responses, visit <http://www.eweb.org/about-us/board-of-commissioners/2021board-agendas-and-minutes>.

Commissioners Present: Mindy Schlossberg, President; John Brown, Vice President; John Barofsky, Sonya Carlson, Matt McRae, Commissioners

Others Present: Frank Lawson, General Manager; Rachael Chilton, Customer Experience Program Manager; Julie McGaughey, Chief Customer Officer

President Schlossberg called the Work Session to order at 5:30 p.m.

Agenda Check

There were no changes or additions to the agenda

Customer Experience Improvement – Demonstration of New Customer Portal

Ms. Chilton and Ms. McGaughey offered the Board a demonstration and PowerPoint presentation on the new EWEB customer portal.

Commissioner McRae said he would be interested in knowing if there were any differences via the new portal between residential and commercial customers. He also wondered how far back into their account history a customer could look.

Ms. Chilton said that right now, there was no difference between residential and commercial customers as far as the customer portal experience was concerned, however there would be room for enhancements in the future. She said customers could go back three years using the Payment History and Billing History tabs in the portal, and they were working toward making current bill PDFs (which currently only go back one year) also available three years into the past.

Commissioner Barofsky wanted to make sure water usage, and the respective rate changes from winter to summer usage, was clear on the bill.

Ms. Chilton replied that, although there was not an example of a water usage tier change in the sample bill provided, staff was working to make it clear when a customer enters a different water usage tier.

Commissioner Barofsky wondered if there was anything being done to incentivize customers to take advantage of paperless billing and/or auto-pay.

Ms. Chilton answered that staff had thought about that, but currently, without incentivizing in this manner, 38% of EWEB customers had chosen the paperless billing option, and industry standard is 20-25%.

Commissioner Carlson asked when the new portal launch was planned.

Ms. Chilton said they were aiming for the end of April 2021.

Commissioner Carlson said she noticed there seemed to be several different layouts for the customer bills. She wondered if customers will be able to choose their layout.

Ms. Chilton said there were a couple of different bill presentments, and they were determined by which program(s) the customer was enrolled in.

Commissioner Carlson wondered how Greenpower donations made by customers would present on the new bill.

Ms. Chilton said that would be a line item under the Electric heading on the bill.

Vice President Brown wondered if stormwater charge categories had been reclassified.

Ms. Chilton said the stormwater information on the bill example was just that—an example; she said the aforementioned stormwater classifications were still on customer bills where applicable, and she added that staff have been working on incremental improvements with the City of Eugene to clear up the stormwater portion of the bill.

Vice President Brown offered those EWEB customers—such as himself—who are enrolled in auto-pay, face a cumbersome process at the expiration of the credit card linked to the account, and he wondered if that had been addressed.

Ms. Chilton said it had been made clearer through the new portal when a customer needed to update their payment method or information.

President Schlossberg wondered if the new portal would help EWEB customer service representatives do their job.

Ms. Chilton said it would. She added the clearer layouts on the bill and new portal would enhance the Customer Service Analysts' experiences alongside the customer experience.

Commissioner Carlson asked if there was a way through the new portal to choose when to pay your bill when opting into auto-pay.

Ms. Chilton answered no.

Commissioner Carlson asked if customers enrolled in auto-pay will still receive emails from EWEB, or would all that type of information (newsletters, etc.) now be on the portal exclusively.

Ms. Chilton said auto-pay ratepayers would still receive email correspondence from the utility letting them know their bill was ready, and the customers could elect to receive other email correspondence from EWEB, using the Notifications function on the portal.

Commissioner Barofsky wondered if a ratepayer could link a bank account to their auto-pay billing, or if it would have to be a credit/debit card.

Ms. Chilton said yes, customers could link a checking or savings account.

Strategic Plan Review

Mr. Lawson offered the Board a review and PowerPoint presentation on EWEB's Strategic Plan (SP).

President Schlossberg wondered how the SP came about initially.

Mr. Lawson said the SP began with a dialogue between staff and the Board, and from his own observations of the Board. He added there was a Work Session in the spring that got the ball rolling on the SP itself.

Commissioner Barofsky said he hoped the SP was not a static document. He wondered how long it would be before another dive was taken by the utility back into the SP.

Mr. Lawson agreed, and furthered that this year: 2021, would be a good year to begin the evolution of the SP.

Commissioner McRae wondered about the timeline for exploring and updating the SP.

Mr. Lawson said he wanted to have a new and improved SP by the end of 2021, and there would be a copious amount of policy discussions to that end in the first few quarters of the year.

President Schlossberg asked about the surveys which were done in 2015 and 2019; she wondered if those types of ratepayer surveys were on a schedule.

Mr. Lawson said EWEB had historically done those types of surveys approximately every two years.

President Schlossberg asked the other Commissioners what they thought was most important for the utility.

Vice President Brown asked what she meant by that. He asked if it was meant what was most important for him as an EWEB Commissioner (and ratepayer), or what was most important for his constituents.

President Schlossberg said both.

Commissioner Barofsky said it was too soon for him to answer that question on behalf of his constituents.

President Schlossberg reminded everyone they could answer the question posed to them at their convenience, and they should not feel like they were under any pressure to answer right now.

Commissioner McRae said he relied on community surveys to carry out his duties as an EWEB Commissioner, and he added it would be helpful for him to have a utility goal centered around the carbon intensity of EWEB's generated electricity over the next several decades.

President Schlossberg said she would like to see the utility look at broadband. She did not know whether EWEB was the organization which should be leading the local push for it, but she said she would like to explore broadband, and EWEB's part in it locally.

Mr. Lawson said there might exist the possibility for the Board to meet in person at the Roosevelt Operations Center (ROC) for the April meeting. He added the public and staff would still be following the meeting remotely, but the capacity of the space at the ROC would allow the Commissioners to attend in person, with social distancing and masks, if they so desired.

Board Wrap-Up

President Schlossberg announced a short Board retreat would be taking place on Monday, February 22, 2021.

President Schlossberg adjourned the meeting at 7:18 p.m.

Recorded by Rodney Cimburke

Assistant Secretary

President